

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6051

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 01783

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CU FR

SUBJECT: CUBAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER VISITS FRANCE

SUMMARY: CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF CUBA, COMPLETED FIVE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE JANUARY 20 EN ROUTE TO COMECON MEETING IN MOSCOW. MAIN CUBAN OBJECTIVE WAS TO OBTAIN INCREASED AND SOFTER TERM COMMERCIAL CREDITS TO OFFSET UNBALANCED TRADING SITUATION WHICH FAVORS FRANCE. ACCORDING TO GOF SOURCE, FRENCH MADE NO PROMISES BEYOND AGREEMENT TO ADDRESS QUESTION IN MIXED ECONOMIC COMMISSION NEXT APRIL. CUBANS TOLD GOF THEY WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WITH USG UNTIL ECONOMIC BLOCKADE IS LIFTED, AND AFTER NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN WILL SEEK TO TERMINATE GUANTANAMO BASE. END SUMMARY.

1. CUBAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER RODRIGUEZ ENDED FIVE-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE JANUARY 20 WHEN HE DEPARTED FOR COMECON MEETING IN MOSCOW. FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR FOR THE AMERICAS, RENE DE ST. LEGIER, TOLD POLCOUNSELOR THAT VISIT WAS ARRANGED ON CUBAN INITIATIVE. IN DISCUSSIONS

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WITH PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC, FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNAR-

GUES, AND FINANCE MINISTER FOURCADE, RODRIGUEZ PRESSED FOR INCREASED AND SOFTER-TERM COMMERCIAL CREDITS TO OFFSET FRANCE'S FAVORABLE TRADE SURPLUS. ST. LEGIER SAID IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO BALANCE COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES WITH CUBA THROUGH IMPORTS BECAUSE CUBA HAS NOTHING TO SELL OF INTEREST TO FRANCE. ST. LEGIER SAID THAT ONLY AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH RODRIGUEZ WERE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO MIXED COMMISSIONS WITHIN WHICH FUTURE COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FIELDS WILL BE DISCUSSED. THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT WAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO THE GOF BECAUSE THE STATUS OF FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL IN CUBA WAS REGULARIZED FOR THE FIRST TIME. ST. LEGIER EMPHASIZED THAT NO PROMISES WERE MADE WITH RESPECT TO AMOUNTS AND TERMS OF FUTURE COMMERCIAL CREDITS. THE TWO UMBRELLA AGREEMENTS ARE PROCEDURAL AND NOT SUBSTANTIVE, HE SAID.

2. ON POLITICAL SUBJECTS, ST. LEGIER SAID RODRIGUEZ AND HIS PARTY STRESSED THE FOLLOWING POINTS: CUBA IS PLEASED THAT THE COHESION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES HAS BROKEN DOWN; CUBA WILL TAKE NO INITIATIVES WITH RESPECT TO RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. IT IS UP TO THE USG TO SUGGEST NEGOTIATIONS. A CUBAN PRECONDITION FOR THE OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. IS THE LIFTING OF THE ECONOMIC BOYCOTT. IF NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE U.S. BEGIN, A MAJOR CUBAN OBJECTIVE WILL BE THE TERMINATION OF THE U.S. BASE AT GUANTANAMO.

3. THE WEEKEND OF JANUARY 18-19 WAS CONSIDERED PRIVATE BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT. ST. LEGIER SAID THAT RODRIGUEZ USED THIS PERIOD TO MAKE CONTACTS WITH THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY. THE GOF DID NOT PROVIDE ANY FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE FOR THESE CONTACTS.

4. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: JANUARY 2L ISSUE OF LE MONDE HAD FOLLOWING ITEM ON RODRIGUEZ VISIT:

"MR. CARLOS RODRIGUEZ, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF CUBA, WHO HAS BEEN VISITING FRANCE SINCE WEDNESDAY, DEPARTED PARIS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 20, AFTER A MEETING
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WITH ECONOMIC MINISTER FOURCADE. THIS CONVERSATION PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE GOF TO STATE ITS INTENTIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE CREDITS THAT CUBA WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN IN SUPPORT OF ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

"THE CONVERSATION THAT I HAD WITH MR. FOURCADE,' RODRIGUEZ SAID, 'RESULTED FIRST OF ALL IN THE DETERMINATION OF THE LEVEL OF FRENCH CREDITS FOR 1975-1976; THAT

LEVEL WILL BE APPROXIMATELY ONE BILLION FIVE HUNDRED MILLION FRANCS. THEIR DISTRIBUTION WILL BE DETERMINED NEXT APRIL IN HAVANA DURING THE FIRST MEETING OF THE FRANCO-CUBAN MIXED COMMISSION WHICH WILL BE CHAIRED ON THE FRENCH SIDE BY EXTERNAL COMMERCE MINISTER SEGARD. IN ADDITION, WE ENVISAGE A TEN-YEAR PROGRAM FOR THE MAJOR INVESTMENTS.'

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"IN THE CONTEXT OF FRENCH RELATIONS WITH OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, SUCH AS THE USSR, THE TERM 'MAJOR INVESTMENT' IS NORMALLY APPLIED TO PROJECTS WORTH AT LEAST 450 MILLION FRANCS (DOLLARS 100 MILLION). NEVERTHELESS, THE DIFFERENCE OF SIZE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

"BEFORE DEPARTING FOR MOSCOW WHERE HE WILL MEET MR. KOSYGIN AND WILL PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING OF COMECON, THE CUBAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED HIS SATISFAC-

TION WITH THE WELCOME THAT HE RECEIVED DURING HIS VISIT. HE TOOK PLEASURE IN NOTING THAT PRIME MINISTER CHIRAC DESIRES AN INCREASE IN FRANCO-CUBAN TRADE. ON BEHALF OF PRIME MINISTER CASTRO, THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER INVITED THE FRENCH PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT CUBA. THIS INVITATION WAS ACCEPTED."

5. AFP WIRE OF JANUARY 20 ADDS FOLLOWING:

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"(QUOTING RODRIGUEZ)...CUBA STRONGLY HOPES FOR FRENCH TECHNOLOGICAL AND INDUSTRIAL PARTICIPATION IN IMPLEMENTING ITS FIVE-YEAR PLAN (1976-1980). A BUDGET OF AROUND 5 BILLION DOLLARS, INDICATED MR. RODRIGUEZ, IS FORESEEN FOR THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROGRAM.

"...(CUBA) EXPECTS THAT FRANCE WILL BE ABLE TO INVEST A BILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS...IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TRUCK ASSEMBLY PLANT, A FERTILIZER MANUFACTURING PLANT, THE MODERNIZATION OF AIRFIELDS, ENLARGEMENT OF THE PORT OF HAVANA, NAVAL CONSTRUCTION, ETC....

"THE QUESTION OF FINANCING REMAINS TO BE DISCUSSED (LENGTH OF CREDITS, INTEREST RATES, GOVERNMENT GUARANTEES)....

"...ON SATURDAY MR. RODRIGUEZ MET WITH LEADERS OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY AND ON SUNDAY HE VISITED MR. FRANCOIS MITTERRAND, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY." END UNCLASSIFIED.

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